



Impact Report

For the year 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023

Our charity clients are continuing to feel the pressures created by the cost of living crisis. They are having to do more with less as demand for their services, from people in greater need than ever, has increased, in a competitive and low resource fundraising environment.

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The last year saw record levels of activity at Cranfield Trust. Our consultancy and mentoring services were up by 15% from last year, and we have seen growth in activity across most of our services. We are pleased that so many charity leaders and managers have engaged with us at such a difficult time in the sector, despite the pressures on them and their organisations, and are proud to have had the chance to work with so many inspiring leaders, managers and trustees.

Areas of concern for Cranfield Trust in our client charities include short term financial management and planning, challenges in board recruitment and governance, and increasing illness and stress. In some cases, limited appetite for change when charities find it difficult to visualize and implement different ways of working, or to consider collaboration or merger partners.

It is very positive that the proportion of our consultancy projects addressing strategic and business planning increased to 63% from 58% in the year, as many charities worked with us to develop their future plans. The proportion of our work represented by mentoring fell to 25% from 31%, but the number of mentoring assignments stayed almost the same at 118. We know that having a mentor has a definite impact on wellbeing, with charity leaders and managers reporting the value of having someone listening to their concerns, focused on them as a person, and able to discuss a range of issues.

A highlight of the last year has been the extensive research we carried out into management training needs and provision amongst smaller charities, kindly supported by the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The report, "Charity Management Matters", was published in November and is shaping our thinking on how we can further support the development of managers, as well as calling on others to collaborate to support their development.

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers, who **are** Cranfield Trust, and without whom our services would not be possible. We are also fortunate to have very valued support from funders, donors, supporters, trustees and colleagues. Thank you all for enabling Cranfield Trust to have a great impact on the small to medium size charities we all value so highly.

It is our pleasure to present our Impact Report 2022-23, to share our successes and to celebrate our impact and that of every one of the charities we've worked with, which are changing lives and society.



Dr Charmaine Griffiths
Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Griffiths".



Amanda Tincknell CBE
Chief Executive

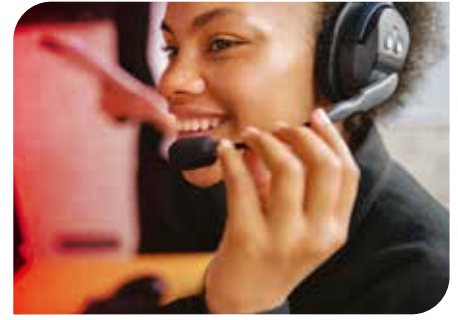
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Tincknell".

Supporting Organisations



Management Consultancy

Our most established pro bono service, providing strategic advice, guidance and support to address organisational challenges, helping charities to achieve their goals.



On Call Telephone Support

Specialist telephone advice on immediate, critical challenges, issues and questions.

Supporting Leaders



Mentoring

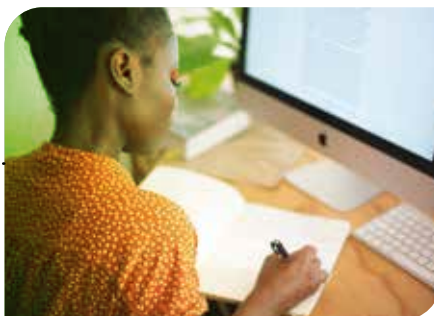
One to one support from volunteer mentors for charity leaders, helping them to discuss and explore challenges and rehearse decisions.



Peer to Peer Exchange

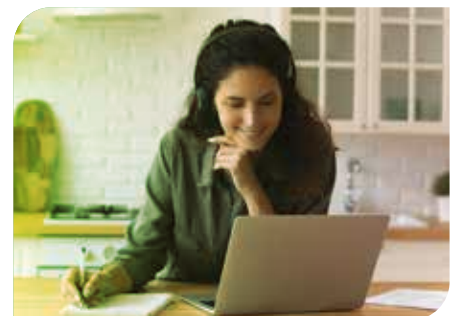
Groups of six to eight charity leaders come together over four meetings to share their challenges and provide mutual support, facilitated by a Cranfield Trust volunteer. Being part of a group helps to tackle the isolation that leaders often feel in their role.

Supporting the Sector



Online resources

Our website hosts an online library of ready-to-use templates, guides, tools and links on essential charity management topics. A range of materials is available on topics in leadership and strategic direction, financial management and sustainability, people management and performance and impact.



Online learning and webinars

We offer a range of free online training events throughout the year, open to charity leaders across the sector. Our 'Essentials to Excellence' series shares key management skills and techniques, and 'Learning with Leaders' webinars provides fresh thinking from academics and leading practitioners.



Cranfield Trust is the leading provider of pro bono management support, mentoring and development to the third sector. Our dedicated staff team and network of skilled and knowledgeable volunteers empower vital social welfare organisations with the confidence and capabilities to thrive.

06 Our Year in Numbers





We started

467

new mentoring assignments and consultancy projects in the year



349

new consultancy projects



118

new mentoring assignments



Including those continuing from the previous year we had

789

active consultancy projects and mentoring assignments in the year



100%

of consultancy and mentoring charity clients would recommend **Cranfield Trust** to others



197

challenging questions were answered through **Cranfield Trust On Call**



149

new volunteers joined us, bringing our volunteer total to

1,430



Across our services, our volunteers gave

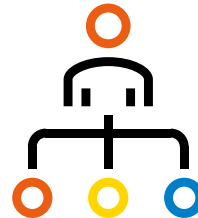
19,237

hours of management support to charities



We ran **14**

Peer to Peer Exchanges



Providing group support for

92

charity leaders



1,440

delegates attended our



12

webinars



641

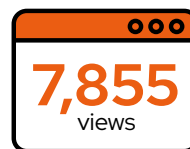
times

our webinar recordings were watched



1,828

downloads of information, guidance, templates and reports from our website



7,855

views

of our resources page

We conservatively value our services to the third sector at

£2,736,894

We couldn't do what we do without our volunteers. We are incredibly grateful to them for sharing their time and expertise with our charity clients.

The number of new volunteers was double that of last year, with 149 management professionals joining us in a range of volunteer roles. This takes the number of volunteers available to support our services to 1,430 an increase of five per cent from last year. Across all our services, Cranfield Trust volunteers provided 19,237 hours of management support to charities.

We place volunteers as locally as possible with our charity clients, but where particular skills are needed or local volunteers are not available, we match clients and volunteers remotely, sharing their skills with social welfare charities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our Regional Managers and Projects and Mentoring Co-ordinators work closely with volunteers, to make sure the right volunteer is matched with each charity client, and to support them as they work together.

"Our volunteer Heather was a great support, knowledgeable and friendly. She was able to help us frame challenges and opportunities and think objectives through from a range of perspectives. We have a clearer way forward thanks to her support and insight."

Together for Essex

98%

of volunteers would recommend volunteering with Cranfield Trust to friends or colleagues

94%

say volunteering for Cranfield Trust gives them personal satisfaction through giving back and making a difference

80%

stay in touch with charity clients after completing their Cranfield Trust assignments

58%

say that volunteering with Cranfield Trust increased their understanding of the voluntary sector

24%

say that volunteering increased their skills, or that they gained new skills

Our volunteers say:

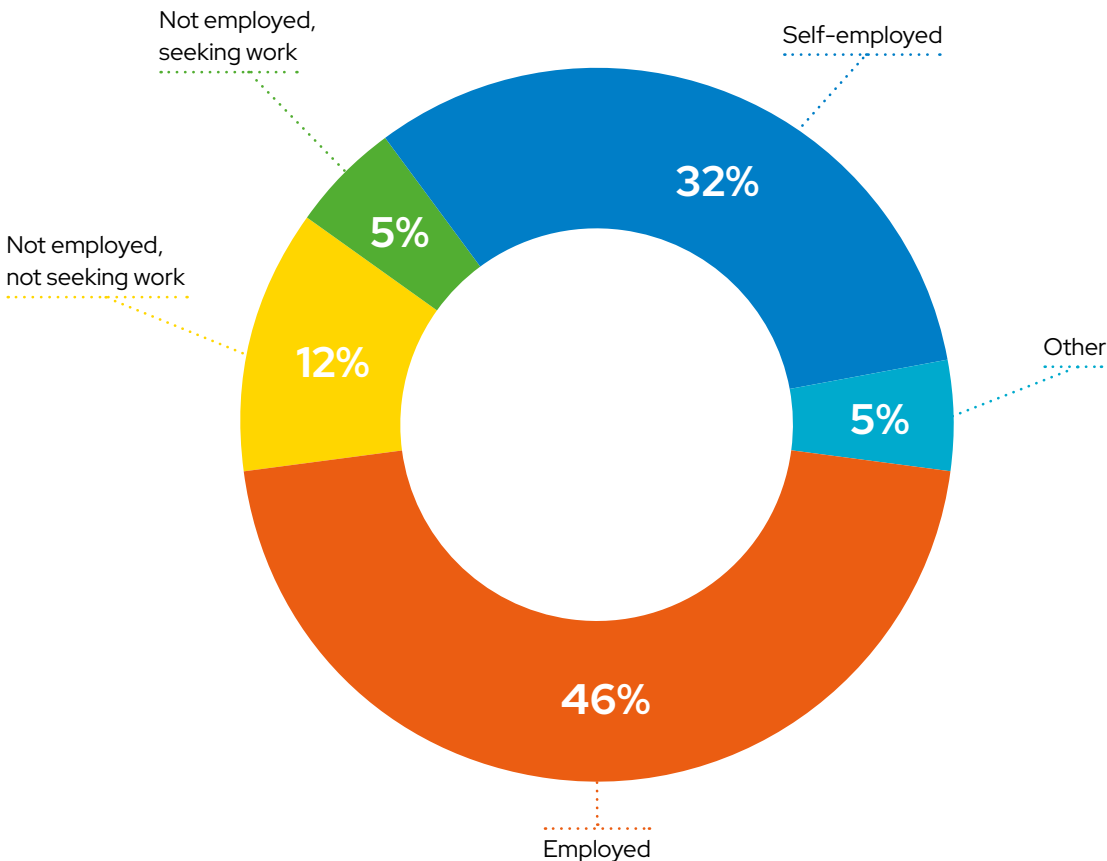
"It has been enjoyable and rewarding to work alongside the CEO of a small charity that makes a substantive difference to some of the most marginalised people on our society. By using my skills to support him as he addresses his challenges, I feel I have helped to make a difference for the people his charity supports."

"Giving back and supporting continual improvement is something really important to me. I'm delighted that through Cranfield Trust, I've been able to support important work within the charity sector."

We are proud to have such excellent people working with us as volunteers, and very grateful for the time, skills and expertise they bring to the charities we work with. Our volunteers make high value contributions to charities and communities, sharing skills with inspiring charity leaders and managers across the country.

"Volunteering for Cranfield Trust has enabled me to expand my skillset and has deepened my knowledge of the charity sector. Thanks to the Trust I have been able to work with some fantastic people and organisations."

"Working with Cranfield Trust has offered me some incredible opportunities to expand my work, supporting charity leaders to grow in skills and confidence. A win-win all round!"



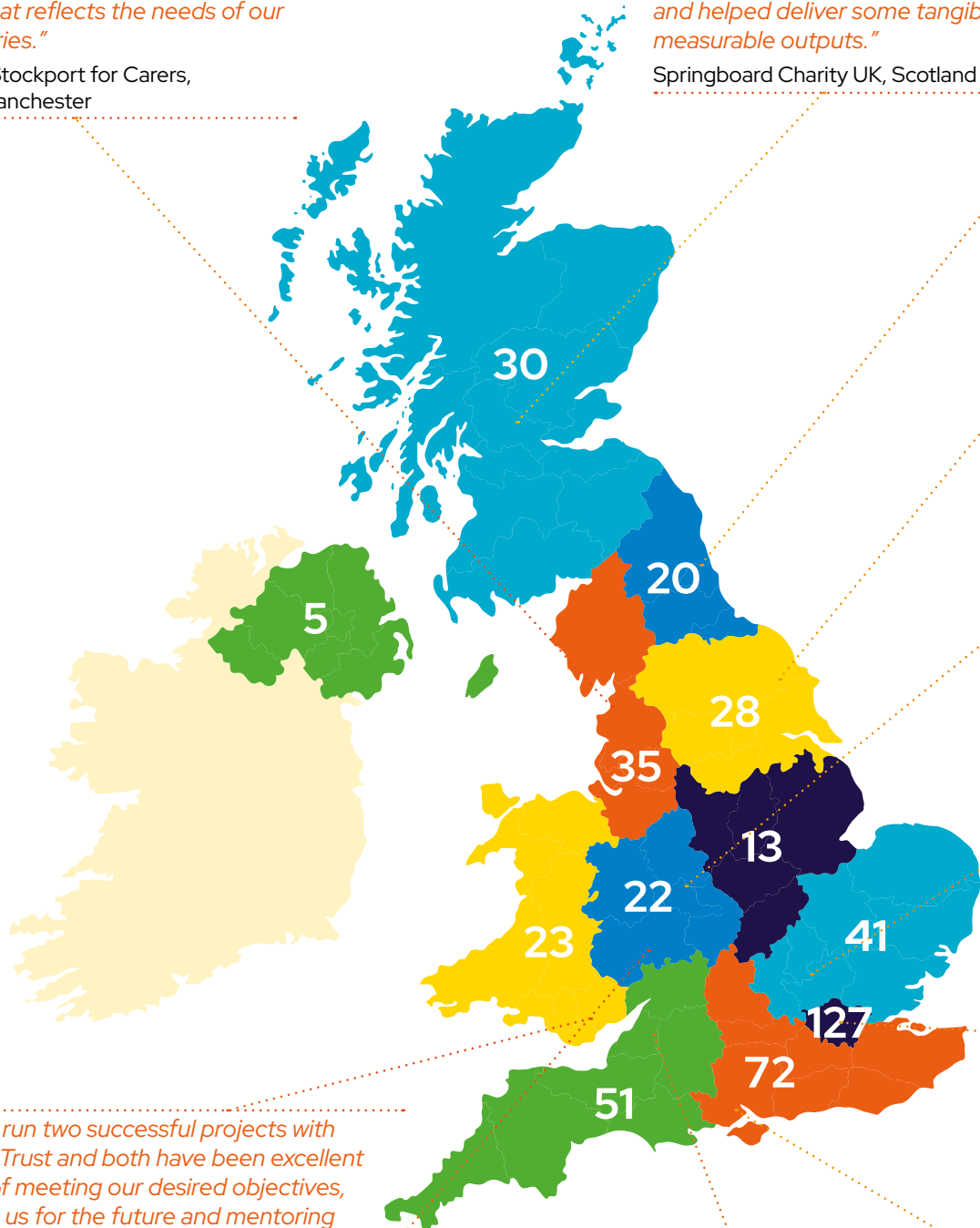
National Impact, Local Presence

"The support from Cranfield Trust and our volunteer has been invaluable. As a small organisation we have struggled in the past to find the support, time and expertise to develop our strategic thinking. Our volunteer brought the team together to focus on our strengths and ideas for the future. With clear action planning we feel more confident that we are delivering a high-quality service that reflects the needs of our beneficiaries."

Signpost Stockport for Carers, Greater Manchester

"We are extremely grateful for the support of Cranfield Trust, which has delivered a huge amount of value to the charity over the past two years. Across three projects spanning trustee training, strategy development and information security, each time Cranfield Trust has really gotten to the heart of the challenge we're looking to address, matched us to a suitable expert and helped deliver some tangible, measurable outputs."

Springboard Charity UK, Scotland



"We have run two successful projects with Cranfield Trust and both have been excellent in terms of meeting our desired objectives, preparing us for the future and mentoring and inspiring our staffing teams. I would thoroughly recommend working with Cranfield Trust."

Sight Life, Cardiff

"In providing expertise and support to small charities like ours, Cranfield Trust offer something unique in the third sector that most small charities would not normally access."

North Worcestershire Basement Projects, Worcestershire

"Cranfield Trust is a fantastic way to connect charities with expertise outside their sector. We have found the support provided by our volunteer mentor to be incredibly helpful, as it has improved learning and expertise within our team, as well as generating instant results."

Life Cycle UK, Bristol

"Our organisation now has a clear vision for the future. The plan will help us to focus on what our purposes are and not drift from our mission. It will help secure funding and will help with a clear vision for all staff, trustees and volunteers. During the project we secured £450K from the national lottery."

Full Circle Food Project, Northumberland

"Getting a volunteer consultant through Cranfield Trust surpassed all my expectations. Our consultant was brilliant, really passionate about our organisation, generous with her time and had researched us well. The partnership has been so successful that we now have an effective and robust growth strategy in place and our consultant has now become our Chair of Trustees so will continue to provide impact to our charity in the longer term."

b:Friend, South Yorkshire

"Cranfield Trust made finding and working with a consultant a breeze. They matched me with a responsive and knowledgeable consultant who understood our charity's objectives. Our volunteer consultant, explained each aspect clearly, making it easy for us to understand and implement our plans effectively."

Uprawr Mental Health Foundation, Birmingham

"Working with Cranfield Trust has significantly changed our organisational culture, financial management and processes. We now have a clear and deliverable plan for growth that is underpinned by an improved understanding of our finances."

Living Your Life (Bedfordshire) CIC, Bedford

"Cranfield Trust provides not only business tools but also experienced volunteers to support charity leaders to deliver their objectives. The benefits of the personal mentoring I have received on this project, as well as the support in writing a business plan and increasing the skills and engagement of the trustees have been invaluable and I cannot thank Cranfield Trust enough."

Island House Community Centre, London

"Cranfield Trust takes the time to know the client and match the volunteer to the need. It's impressive how it works. Our volunteer consultant was engaging, an effective listener and understood the nuances of working with trustees, leaders and the team. His knowledge, expertise and approach ensured an incredibly successful journey for us in developing our new strategy to change the lives of young people in the UK for the long-term."

Tall Ships Youth Trust, Hampshire

During the year, we started

349

new consultancy projects

118

new mentoring assignments

across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The total number of projects and assignments for each region are shown on the map.

In total, we had

789

active consultancy projects and mentoring assignments during the year

The number of new projects and assignments that we start every year is a key activity measure. Our Co-ordinators and Regional Managers play an invaluable role in each one as they spend time at the start of each assignment to connect with our charity clients, understanding their ambitions and capabilities, and scoping their requirements for support.

For each assignment, the most appropriate volunteer is identified and introduced, the person with the right expertise and background to successfully support the charity. Our staff team stay close to each assignment, supporting each volunteer and charity from start to conclusion. We work to nurture positive relationships by listening, acting and building trust.

Supporting Across Sectors

We provide services to welfare charities and other non profits across a wide range of sectors. We generally see a fluctuation within the top 10 sectors but support for community organisations always remains close to the top of our list.

During the year we saw the economic, social and community sector receiving the most support through consultancy and mentoring, particularly in the area of strategic and business planning. Organisations in this group provide a range of services to different groups in their communities, often acting as a first stop for people in need. They are working under considerable pressure as demand for services increases, due to the cost of living crisis, running costs are high and fundraising is extremely challenging.

The number of organisations we have worked with in the mental health sector has increased, due to growing demands following the pandemic and the impact of economic pressures on people's mental health and wellbeing. Last year, mental health was not in the top 7 of sectors we supported, this year it was our second largest area of work.

Other main areas supported were housing and homelessness and health services, followed by learning disability, education, refugees and migrants and disability.

Top sub sectors supported through our pro bono consultancy and mentoring:

Economic, social and community development

Mental health and crisis intervention

Housing and homelessness

Learning disability

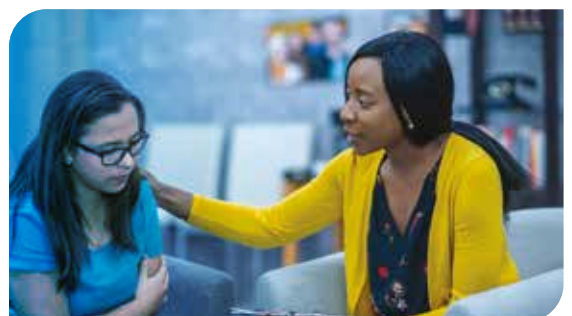
Education and opportunity

Refugees and migrants

Physical disability

Employment and training

Carers





Supporting Across Sectors

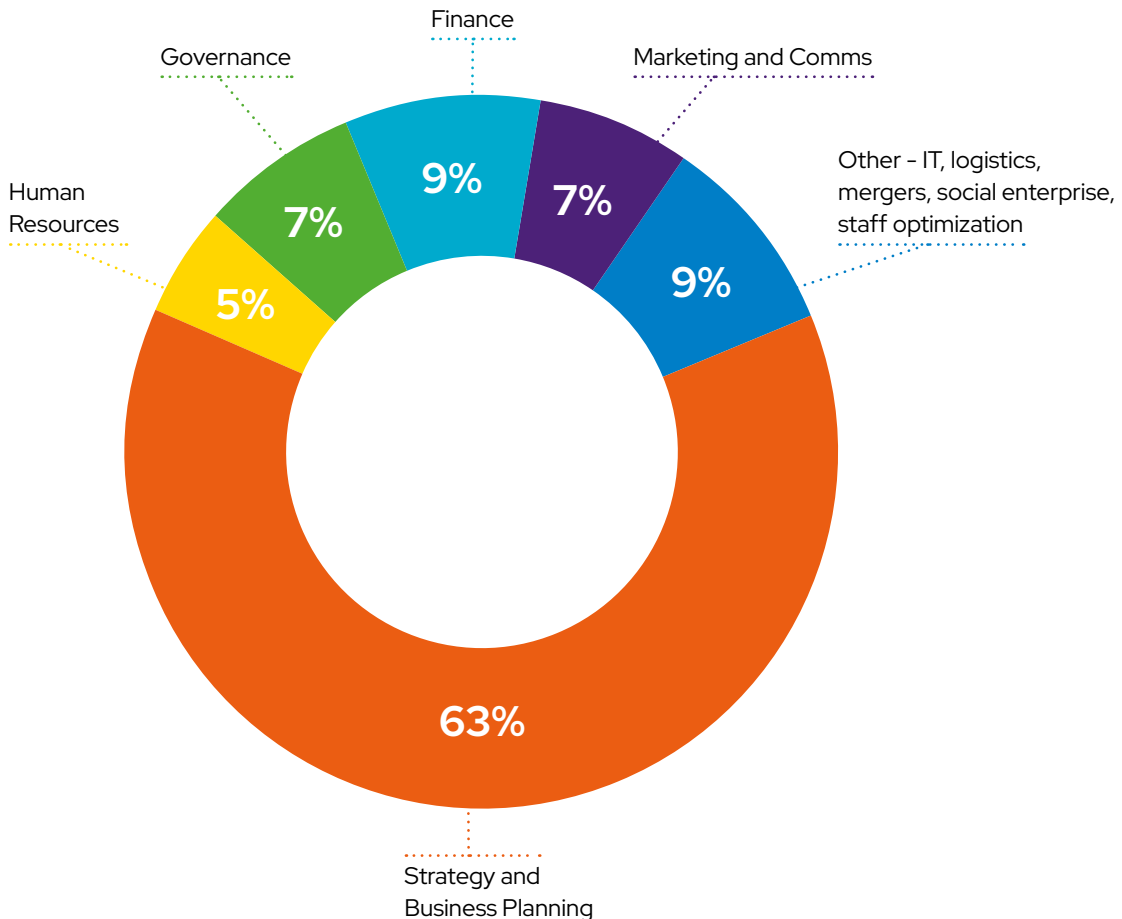
Supporting Organisations

Our pro bono management consultancy provides charities with free tailored and intensive one to one support to address critical organisation development and management challenges. Our charity clients are experts in their service areas but have limited resources to invest in organisation and personal development.

We find charities the right person, with the right skills, at the right time.

Our Regional Managers invest time and care with our charity clients to scope and agree each project, working with them to develop and agree their own objectives. Regional Managers search our network of volunteers to identify the volunteer with the most appropriate skills, experience and background as the right fit for the charity. They introduce charity and volunteer consultant, and remain close to the project until successful conclusion.

Projects work to the charity’s timetable – they can be a short amount of volunteer input in a tight timescale, or run over a longer period, depending on what is needed to achieve the project objectives and embed the outcomes into the charity.



New Horizons Mental Health is a mental health and emotional wellbeing charity based in Wales.

First established in 1990 by a small group of volunteers to support family members and friends who were leaving the local long-stay psychiatric hospital, the charity has gone from strength to strength and now offers a range of support services for adults in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area experiencing mental health issues.

New Horizons contacted Cranfield Trust for support in developing a 3-5 year business plan. Their last business plan was over five years old, and there have been many changes in the mental health sector since then. The charity wanted a plan to support the growth of services and secure more funding.

After initial conversations with Cranfield Trust's Regional Manager for Wales, the charity was matched with a volunteer with the skills best suited to its needs. Ben is a business architect with 10 years' experience in the financial services sector. Ben was in search of a local charity where he could offer his professional expertise in business planning and strategy, and was keen to better understand the charity sector and the challenges it faces, for his own development.

Ben spent time working with New Horizons to fully understand the charity's position and goals, and was then able to start discussing the steps needed to reach those goals. With Ben's support in drawing out their ideas and how to structure them strategically, the New Horizons Team was able to write their business plan themselves, giving them complete ownership of the plan and its implementation.

By working with Ben, New Horizons were able to produce a strategic business plan with clear actions to take through the next three to five years, helping them to secure funding and expand their offering. Since creating the plan, the charity has been able to secure Lottery funding of almost £300,000.

With demand for its services continuing to rise, the business plan will allow New Horizons to respond and increase its services, enabling it to better support its beneficiaries and reach those most in need, with its services.

The charity said:

"The support from Cranfield Trust and the plan we have been able to create will, over time, show that we are more focused on getting services right for different people and allow us to target a wider range of people in a wider range of areas."



"We have found Cranfield Trust's support for our charity to be enthusiastic, flexible, and long-term, allowing us time to think through what we discuss during sessions with our volunteer, and follow-up. We are now more confident about business plans, our choices of services/products, and how to select those that will best fulfill our objectives and mission rather than trying to do all of them. We are glad to know that Cranfield Trust is there for us."



Volunteer Ben said:

"Working on this project has allowed me to understand a whole new sector and develop new skills that I wouldn't have previously gained in the same way in the corporate world. Working within the charity sector has allowed me to understand people better and think about how I communicate with others and what resonates with them. That is something I have been able to bring back with me into my day job, to ensure I am being as accessible and engaging for others as I can. The whole experience has just made me think differently about how I approach things and has been rewarding."



Our services for charities across Wales were supported through a grant from Waterloo Foundation in 2022-23.

Journey to Excellence (J2E) is our unique evaluation and impact measurement framework and has been specifically designed to help charity clients to focus on their development needs.

The J2E framework helps charities to identify management strengths and areas for development through working with Cranfield Trust on their journey to excellent performance. It is an integral part of our consultancy and is used to evaluate the impact of our consultancy support.

Each charity starts its development journey at a different point, we do not select charities with high potential for development, but seek to support all our client charities to address their particular issues.

Charities rate their own confidence and capability, in a structured conversation with a Cranfield Trust Regional Manager, and many charities use their J2Es as the basis for discussions with their Boards and teams. Completing the J2E again after the project has concluded allows each charity to celebrate its successes and consider the next steps in its development. Charities give us very positive feedback on J2E, they find it valuable in assessing their development needs over time, and in action-oriented discussions with Cranfield Trust Regional Managers.

J2E is particularly useful for individual charities, but we also aggregate information across all our consultancy projects, covering all areas of support.



Overall, our clients improved their performance by an average of 19% as a result of the support they received through our consultancy services, up from 15% last year.

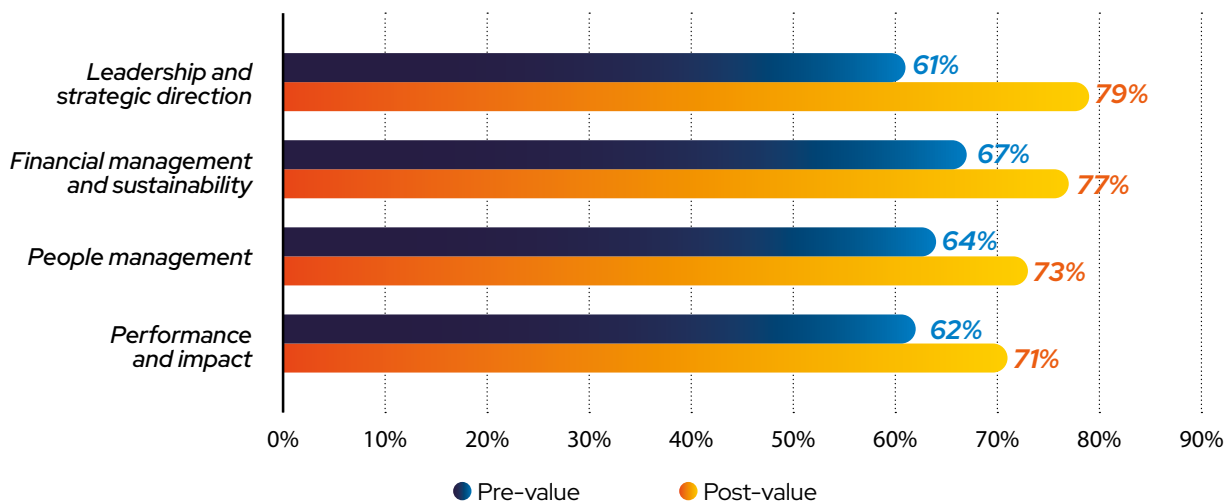
77% of the completed J2Es related to consultancy projects in the leadership and strategic direction area. Project duration ranged from 2 to 22 months, with an average of just over 11 months.

Journey to Excellence main project area and capability ratings

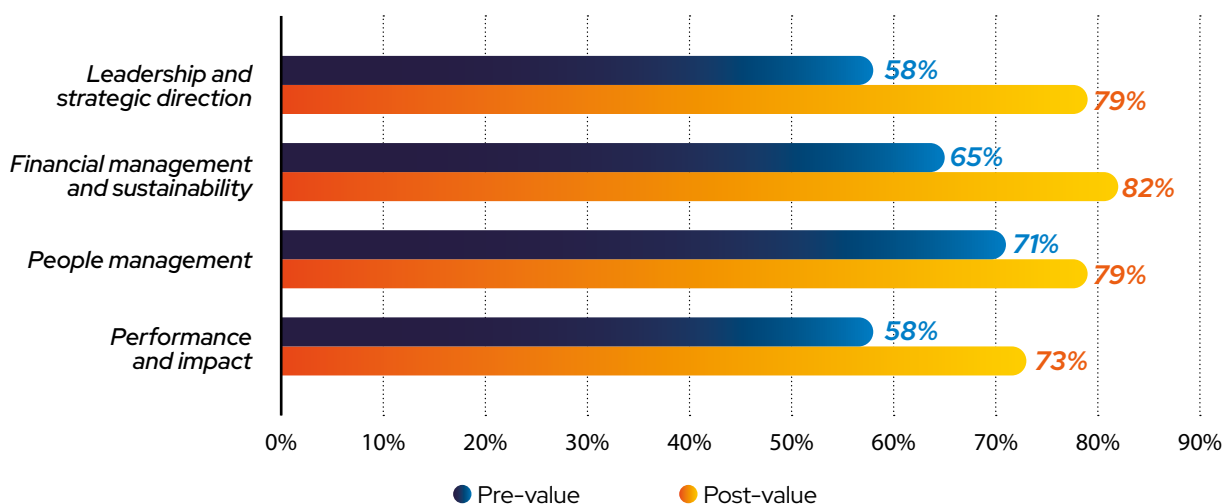
J2E Main Project Area	Number of charities with main project in area	Average PRE-PROJECT capability rating	Average POST-PROJECT capability rating	% change
Leadership and strategic direction	87	59%	79%	20%
Financial management and sustainability	12	65%	82%	17%
People management	10	70%	78%	8%
Performance and impact	6	58%	73%	15%

The two graphs below show the 106 J2E Consultancy Project results across all four management areas. Whilst working on one main management area, project work often relates to aspects within all four areas. Dark blue lines show the pre-project (baseline) ratings, orange/yellow the post project ratings.

Average pre and post project scores by All Project Areas (directly targeted by the consultancy project and indirectly related to the project work)



Average pre and post project scores for Main Project Areas (areas directly targeted by the consultancy project)



Art at the Heart CIC was founded in 2016.

Alarmed by the rising levels of mental health issues and the numbers of teenagers coming to art and design as a last resort, the founders decided they needed to act.

With 25 years' experience in post 16 education, they had witnessed how arts and cultural education positively affected lives.

Kamaljit and Mukesh set up Art at the Heart CIC to work with communities, employers and schools to embed the arts into everyday life. Arts and culture can play a preventative role against some of society's challenges, assisting with reducing stress, increasing wellbeing and creative problem solving.

Art at the Heart reached out to Cranfield Trust in 2022 as it was applying for National Portfolio status with the Arts Council. To strengthen its application and ability to deliver projects on a larger scale, the CIC was aware it needed to be more in tune with the Arts Council areas of focus, including governance. Art at the Heart wished to build on its mission, vision, values and three year plan to help it grow and develop and to meet the Arts Council brief. It had appointed a Chair, but needed support in building the rest of the Board, finding the right people with the right skills.

An appropriate volunteer was identified: Deirdre had experience in the arts sector, and knowledge of fundraising for arts organisations.



Founder Director Mukesh commented on the impact of the project, and J2E:

"Deirdre brought clarity to our vision, helped us to realise our potential, sharpened our monitoring and evaluation systems to deliver higher quality services, and facilitated the process of becoming tender ready."

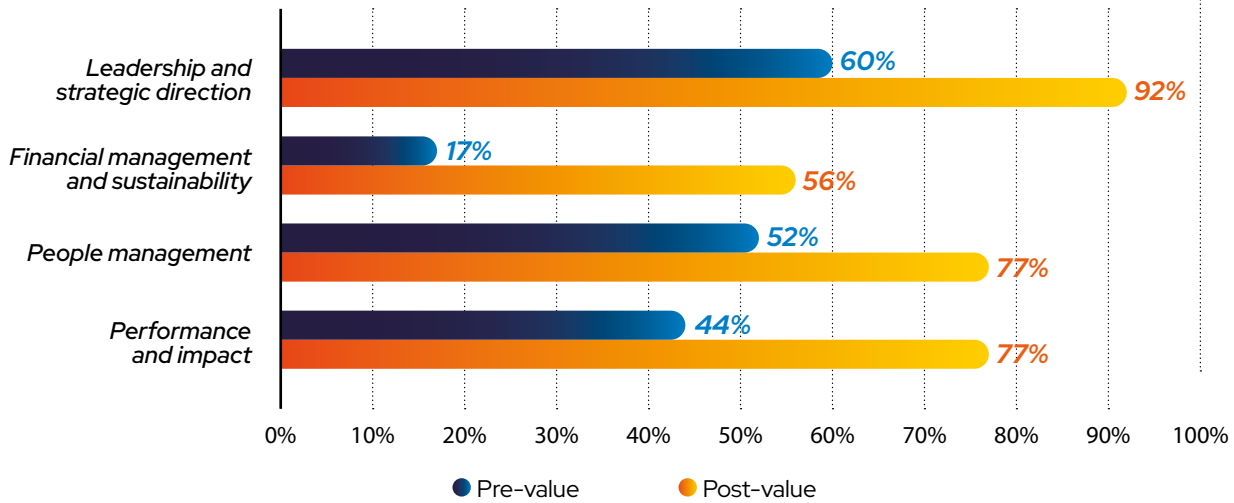


Overall Impact

Art at the Heart improved in all four project areas. The journey travelled within the main project area of Leadership and Strategic Direction saw the organisation move forward by 32%. Within Performance and Impact, Financial and People management, they did equally well. Whilst the J2E Consultancy Project focused on Leadership and Strategic direction, working diligently on board development and business planning, the entire process contributed to improvement over all four areas. Improvement beyond the main consultancy area reflected their commitment towards better performance across the whole organisation.

"Cranfield Trust clearly understands the varying needs of the sector and provides an exceptional and personalised service – our organisation has benefitted enormously. Thank you."

Average pre and post scores across project areas.



In the post-project assessment, Art at the Heart travelled forward in 38 out of 48 possible areas. They acknowledged the need for continued improvement and with support from Cranfield Trust and our volunteer Deirdre they now have renewed confidence as well as robust business practices to enable the organisation to continue in their mission, supporting wellbeing and combating inequality through creative and cultural education.

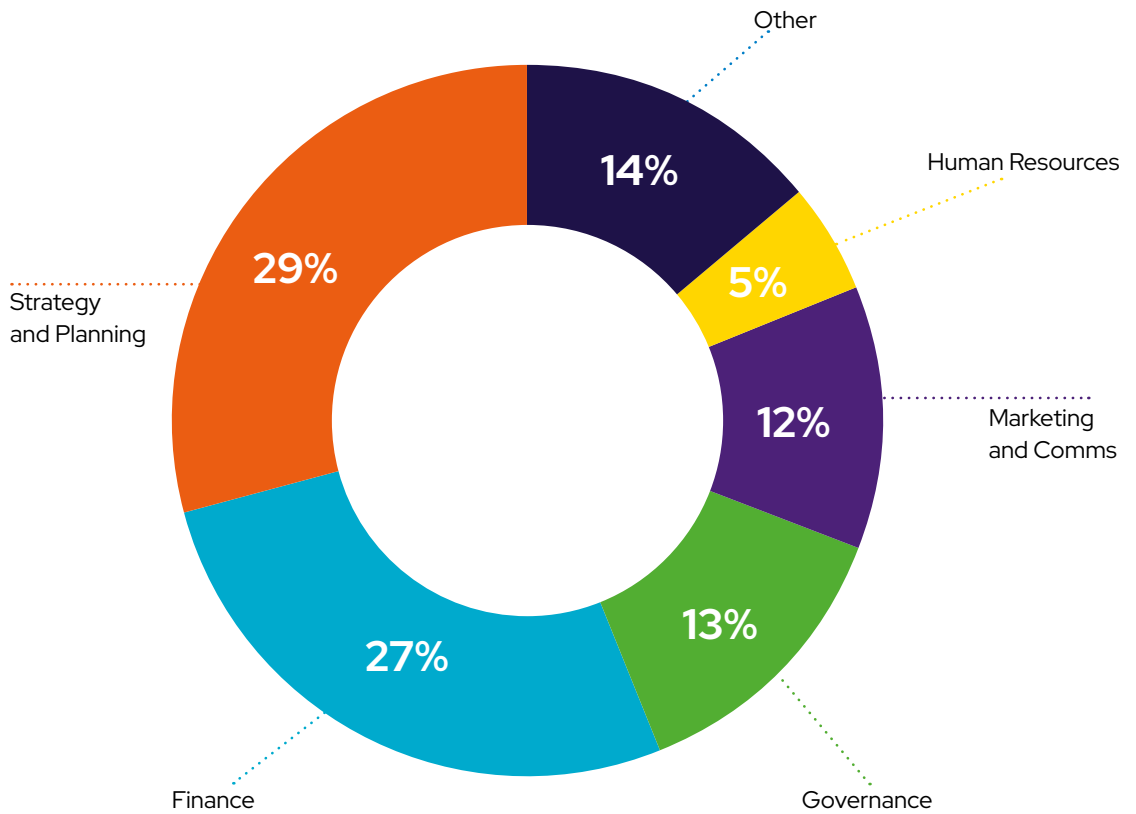


Cranfield Trust On Call provides free help, advice and guidance to charity leaders facing critical issues.

It addresses immediate short questions, which do not need a full consultancy project. On Call gives leaders the opportunity to talk to an experienced member of our team as well as a volunteer with the right skills and expertise to help them address the challenge. Calls explore possible solutions to problems and provide the clarity and confidence that charities need to make timely decisions.

During the year, we offered 'Charity Contact Days' at key times of the year, including Small Charity Week and Welsh Charities Week. The number of On Calls delivered more than tripled from 60 last year to 197 calls during the year. We have increased the number of volunteers who support On Call to 76 during this year.

Most calls were on strategy and planning, closely following by finance topics. Governance and marketing and communications were also high on the On Call list for support during this year. On Call can sometimes also lead to longer term consultancy projects as it helps to tackle immediate problems, leading charity leaders to think about longer term issues or planning.



- 197** charity leaders received On Call advice in the last year
- 76** volunteers supported On Call
- 99%** of charity callers would use On Call again
- 99%** would recommend On Call to other organisations
- 99%** felt that the call had helped to resolve their problem or question

"In one hour of focused time, we managed to cover so much ground. I came away feeling I had a much better understanding of our finances and where to focus my energies for the future. To say it was an hour well spent is an understatement. The support as always was well targeted, considered and backed up by a depth of knowledge and experience that is hard to come by."

Neil Dunsire, Chief Officer TAPE.

Hear more from Neil about his Cranfield Trust On Call experience
www.cranfieldtrust.org/stories/on-call



Charity Contact Days

In February we trialed our first Charity Contact Days in Wales, providing our On Call service and help to charities with immediate challenges. Charity leaders booked time slots with volunteers with appropriate skills to respond to pressing management question and concerns. 30 charities were supported on the day, covering questions mainly focused on governance and financial management.

With free expert support from a Paediatric Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, and Speech and Language Therapist, Playskill offers group play sessions for children aged 1-5 which use play as a tool for development.

Through our strategic partnership of charity support with Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), Playskill was nominated by a local Freemason for On Call support, to discuss their annual financial reporting. The charity were unsure of exactly what information should be included and how to present it. They were also looking for some guidance around the calculation of direct and indirect costs and the calculation and management of reserves.

After initial conversations with Cranfield Trust staff, Playskill was matched with volunteer consultant Frank. As well as a career in financial management, Frank has 15 years' experience within different charities, including as a trustee. By speaking with Playskill's Finance Manager, Frank was able to gain an understanding of their current financial reporting and provide advice on areas that needed improvement and the steps to take to do so.

Playskill was provided with templates and examples to guide them on what information to prepare and how to present it. Frank also pointed Playskill towards some resources on Cranfield Trust's website on how annual accounts can help with fundraising.

"Frank's advice has been hugely helpful for us. His expertise and experience were just what we were looking for, and the team now has a much better understanding."



Founded in 2006, Playskill provides support to pre-school age children with physical disabilities, and their families, in Hertfordshire.



The last year has continued to present exceptional challenges for charity leaders as their organisations have been readjusting to life after the pandemic, whilst facing increased demand and financial pressures as a result of the cost of living crisis. Having a mentor to discuss a range of problems, to rehearse decisions, and to give some personal thinking space on a regular basis, is important support for our charity clients.

"I found Cranfield Trust's Mentoring scheme to be a real-life changer. Having the space and time to really get underneath my work practices in a supportive, non-judgmental and non-confrontational way was liberating. Practical and positive - I couldn't recommend it more. Whatever Cranfield Trust is doing they are doing it right - keep it up! Thank you so much for your help."

Miracles Project Director

Through our pro bono mentoring programme, 118 Chief Executives, emerging leaders and Board Chairs have benefitted from one to one guidance and advice from our volunteer mentors, making mentoring 25% of our intensive support.

Volunteer mentors attended reflective sessions during the year. The 14 sessions supported volunteers to learn from one another and continuously improve their mentoring practice.

100% of charity leaders would recommend our mentoring, an increase from 97% last year.



Top five reported benefits from mentoring for charity leaders:

- Developing confidence and self-belief
- Learning how to approach different scenarios
- A positive influence on wellbeing
- Helping to solve one or more specific issues
- Great clarity about role and career development

Lewisham Speaking Up is an advocacy organisation that provides support to people with learning disabilities, to ensure that they can speak up, be heard, and have stronger voices.

The charity came to Cranfield Trust for mentoring support. At the time, their CEO, who had been in the organisation for a few years working in different roles, wanted to enhance and improve their existing skills and gain support in areas with which they were less familiar, or where they were less confident. They wanted to continue moving the organisation forward successfully and build their leadership capabilities.

The charity CEO was matched with longstanding Cranfield Trust volunteer Christopher, who has many years management experience, including mentoring, executive coaching, leadership, and strategic business management.

Over the course of 15 mentoring sessions, Christopher and the CEO covered many different areas and topics. During these sessions, Christopher provided mentoring support on the particular issues faced by the CEO, supporting the development of their skills, and Lewisham Speaking Up as an organisation. The mentoring included advice and coaching in several areas including leadership, staff management, board management, fundraising, and sustaining ideas.

Following the mentoring support, the Lewisham Speaking Up CEO said:

“Being a CEO of a small charity can be lonely, demanding, and often daunting. Having a mentor through Cranfield Trust has provided me with somebody reliable, knowledgeable, supportive, and experienced to help me problem solve, tackle complexities, and overcome barriers more effectively. A mentor means you are not alone: I would recommend this service to new Directors/CEOs in particular.”





"The mentoring has given me greater knowledge and confidence, which has benefitted the organisation as a whole. The mentoring came at a very challenging time: post-Covid followed by a cost of living crisis and funding difficulties. The mentor was very effective in supporting me through these challenges, which has given greater resilience to the organisation overall."

Cranfield Trust volunteer, Christopher added:

"It has been enjoyable and rewarding to work alongside the CEO of a small charity that makes a substantive difference to some of the most marginalised people in our society. By using my skills to support him as he addresses his challenges, I feel I have helped to make a difference for the people his charity supports."

We are very aware that in a highly pressurised and changing operating environment, charity leaders need to feel and be supported.

Our Peer to Peer Exchange groups offer charity leaders the opportunity to share their challenges with each other, providing mutual support and reducing feelings of isolation. They are facilitated by trained volunteers who support each group over six meetings.

Peer to Peer Exchange participants are usually Chief Executives of their organisations. They take it in turns to be the 'challenge owner', bringing their individual challenges and questions to discuss with the group.

Our volunteers have generously supported 14 Peer to Peer Exchange groups, welcoming 92 participants. This is an increase from 8 groups with 43 participants in the previous year.



Participants gave the top three benefits as:



"Working with like-minded professionals has been good. The support and understanding we've shared have been invaluable. It's incredible to see how most of us have all related to each other's concerns and issues. Sharing experiences and engaging in open discussions has been so rewarding - I feel like I've grown both personally and professionally."

Mary How Trust

"The Peer to Peer Exchange has given me a supportive, thoughtful, safe space to share and learn from other leaders in a vulnerable and positive way, without the guilt of taking time for myself. I feel like I've gained a diverse, external 'SMT' that I really needed to support me through the challenges that I couldn't take elsewhere, both practically and emotionally. If you're considering it, I would urge you to give it a try. It could be a game changer!"

Anonymous participant

"My Peer to Peer Exchange experience was an enriching and supportive one. Having a safe space to discuss challenges, reflect on practice and support other professionals every two weeks provided an opportunity that's not usually accessible. It has been a very valuable experience."

Sussex Pathways



At the first meeting of each Peer to Peer Exchange group, everyone is asked 'Why did you say yes to being here?'

"I work remotely and felt disconnected from the other leaders in my team"

"[people at work] are knocking my self-belief"

"I'm suddenly the CEO and feel I don't know what I'm doing most of the time, I'm exhausted"

"Struggling with enthusiasm and motivation while working remotely"

At the end of each session everyone is asked 'How are you feeling as we wrap up?'

"Grateful to have found this space, it feels very safe already"

"I feel great, I've stumbled on a real gem - I'm really excited for the next sessions"

"I've been looking for a group of peers... where's this been the whole time?! I'm grateful"

"I didn't realise how much I'd been holding in, I feel so relieved to share"

Our free webinars have continued to provide learning and development opportunities for charities across the sector. During the year 1,440 delegates attended our 12 live sessions, and 2,477 registered in total. Everyone who registered was sent a link to the recording of the webinar session, slides and links to wider reading related to the webinar topic.



We deliver our webinars across two areas: "Learning with Leaders", which provides insight and fresh thinking from academics and leading practitioners, and "Essentials to Excellence", which covers a range of practical management topics.

We are very grateful to all our volunteers, partners and professionals who give their time and expertise through the webinars to support charity leaders and managers.

In the year, the most popular webinars were related to securing funds through impact reporting, developing your brand, and exploring how to make your organisation more 'investable'.



"What an excellent organisation. They offer strong targeted support that is so invaluable to small overworked charities like my own."

Delegate at Investability Webinar

"An insightful, informative and expert-led session that helps small charities to cut through the noise and focus on what's most important. With small charities under so much pressure, it's never been more timely. Thank you!"

Delegate at Understanding Marketing and its Importance Webinar

"Cranfield Trust webinars always offer new insights into topics of relevance to the charity sector - I always come away with new ideas as it's very refreshing to hear different perspectives on common themes."

Delegate at Creating Value through Branding Webinar

"Yet another well focused, well coordinated training event put on by Cranfield Trust with an experienced and understanding presenter providing real ideas and suggestions."

Delegate at Strategies and Insights for Leadership Success

Top 5 webinars by numbers of delegates:

Effective Impact Reporting: Improve how you collect and report on data

Creating Value Through Branding

Personal Resilience: Strategies and Insights for Leadership Success

Being inspired as a leader: How to inspire yourself and your team

Investability: Why should I invest time or money in your charity?

Top 5 most viewed webinar recordings:

Investability: Why should I invest time or money in your charity?

Creating Value Through Branding

Effective Impact Reporting: Improve how you collect and report on data

Being inspired as a leader: How to inspire yourself and your team

Personal Resilience: Strategies and Insights for Leadership Success

In the year, we explored management skills development needs, learning and training on a wider basis through a research project:

"Charity Management Matters."
Please see Page 38 for more detail.

We are very grateful to the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) for funding our Peer to Peer Exchanges and webinars during this year. Just under 2,500 charity delegates benefited from development through the MCF supported webinars by attending live or receiving the recording, slides and wider signposting.



Through the resource area of our website, we cover a range of key management topics and offer information and guidance to help charity leaders make informed decisions and develop new ideas.

Our volunteers and colleagues contribute articles, blogs, case studies, templates and tools throughout the year.

Our most read blogs and resource downloads reveal charity leaders to be very focused on financial strategy and financial management, as well as good governance and impact reporting.

7,855 number of times our website resources area was viewed

1,828 number of resource downloads from the website

39,630 views of the pro bono support page of our website

Top document downloads:

- 1** Charity Guide to Accounting and Finance Systems
- 2** 10 ways to improve your charity's impact report
- 3** Measuring the Good impact framework
- 4** Theory of Change template
- 5** Finance questions every new trustee should ask

Top five blogs and articles read on the website

- 1** Top 10 financial ratios for charities
- 2** Founder syndrome undermines the legacy of strong leaders
- 3** How to access free and pro bono advice for charities
- 4** Payroll for charities: what you need to know
- 5** Challenges facing small charities





As an independent charity, Cranfield Trust is grateful to have the support of individuals, grantmakers and businesses that contribute donations, unrestricted funding, grants to support specific communities and activities, and 'in kind' goods and services.

Individual donors

We are very fortunate to benefit from the gifts of generous individuals, who make regular and one-off donations in support of our work.

Unrestricted funding

We are deeply grateful to have the support of a number of individuals and organisations that share our vision of a strong, capable and confident voluntary sector, providing us with unrestricted funding that enables us to plan our work and develop as an organisation.

This year, we were grateful for the very significant financial support of

- **The Robert and Rosie Wright Charity**
- **Pears Foundation**
- **One Anonymous donor**
- **The Dulverton Trust**
- **Four Acre Trust**
- **Beatrice Laing Trust**
- **The Princess Anne's Charities**

Focused funding

We are very grateful to those generous funders and donors who have provided financial support for specific activities at the Trust, or towards our services for charities in specific regions or sub-sectors.

In the year, we benefitted from the following support:

- **Garfield Weston Foundation** (Midlands, North West and South West)
- **Pen Y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund** (Pen Y Cymoedd area of benefit)
- **The Steel Charitable Trust** (Bedfordshire)
- **The Society of the Holy Child Jesus** (towards services for charities supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers)
- **The Waterloo Foundation** (Wales)
- **Masonic Charitable Foundation** (supporting our webinars, Peer to Peer Exchanges and the Charity Management Matters research project and report)
- **Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust** (Kent)
- **Lawson Trust** (Kent and Sussex)
- **Shears Foundation** (Tyne & Wear / Northumberland)
- **The 29th May 1969 Charitable Trust** (West Midlands)
- **Gaynor and Edward Humphreys** (Tyne & Wear / Northumberland)

Partnerships and Programmes

Cranfield Trust is proud to work in partnership with a range of grantmaking organisations to deliver capacity building and development support for communities of charities and grantees. Through our varied programmes, we deliver enhanced support, addressing clients' needs and funders' strategic objectives.

Our new and ongoing partners were:

- **Masonic Charitable Foundation**
- **City Bridge Foundation**
- **The Ministry of Justice**
- **Essex Community Foundation**
- **The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund**
- **The Gannochy Trust**
- **Gloucestershire Community Foundation**
- **Oak Foundation**
- **Jack Petchey Foundation**
- **Lloyds Bank Foundation**
- **Barnwood Trust**

We were also very grateful for the in-kind support and pro bono services we received from **Affinity, CAPCO, Cranfield University and Tetra Networks**.

We are grateful to those charity clients who made financial contributions towards the cost of their consultancy and mentoring support.



Switchback aims to give every male aged 18-30 released from prison in London a chance to make real and lasting changes in their life, so that they can live stable and rewarding lives.

By combining a personalised, intensive mentoring relationship with a practical program, Switchback can make employment a realistic prospect for this vulnerable group.

Switchback's Delivery Manager Sarah requested some mentoring through The Triangle Trust 1949 Fund's Spark programme, which delivers capacity building services to grantees through a partnership with Cranfield Trust. Sarah was looking for mentoring to enable her to develop her managerial skills and deepen her knowledge of team leadership. She wanted to be a steady influence on her team and be able to support them to the best of her ability. Due to an increase in the number of people that Sarah was going to be managing within a short amount of time, she felt that now was the right time to further develop her existing management skill set so she could become a stronger leader and be better able to support the different needs of her team members.

Following an in depth discussion with Cranfield Trust Regional Manager Sue to understand more about her role, organisation and what she was hoping to achieve through mentoring, Sarah was matched with a volunteer that suited her needs, skills, and interests – volunteer mentor Rania. Rania has been part of many successful mentor partnerships since she started volunteering with Cranfield Trust in 2015. Over the course of a year, Sarah and Rania had several meetings where Sarah was able to share the challenges she was facing and Rania was able to provide advice and support as well as offer another perspective to Sarah's situation.

Following the conclusion of their mentoring sessions, Sarah felt that she had been able to improve her skills and competence within her role because of her mentoring partnership with Rania as well as learning how to approach different scenarios, develop her confidence and improve her communication skills.

As a result, Sarah feels that she can advocate more strongly than before for her organisation, which will ultimately allow beneficiaries to access an even stronger and effective service.



"My mentor, Rania, was a great listener - empathetic, reflective and completely understood my job and the dynamics within my role and organisation. Rania was open, understanding, challenging and incredibly supportive. I couldn't have got through the last three months in my job without implementing her feedback and advice"

Sarah, Delivery Manager at Switchback

"It was an absolute pleasure mentoring Sarah and seeing her grow over the last year. Sarah is an incredible leader who cares passionately about people and is firmly focused on making a difference through her work. Acting as her mentor has furthered my understanding of the challenges faced by charity managers. I enjoyed sharing my leadership experiences and hearing Sarah's progress as she tried new ways of working following our sessions. I've learnt a lot from all the mentees I've met through Cranfield Trust and would thoroughly recommend others share their skills and experience through mentoring."

Rania, Cranfield Trust Volunteer Mentor

Working with hundreds of charities in detail each year, we have developed a deep understanding of their skills, skills gaps and development needs.

In 2023, we set out to explore the possible development of a management training programme especially for small to medium size charities.

We undertook a research project: 'Charity Management Matters', generously funded by the Masonic Charitable Foundation. Researcher Matilda Gosling worked with us to explore charities' views on their management skills and skills development needs, and available leadership and management training.

Key research findings

- Based on availability and demand, the research identified gaps in management training essentials, including financial strategy, evaluation and impact, organisation strategy, change management, project management and EDI.
- Many organisations are unable to pay for training, with just under half of those surveyed not having a training budget. 40% of courses in our market map are free, but free courses are often perceived to be low quality, this perception is something that training providers need to address.
- Training budgets, where they exist, come from unrestricted funds, which can be hard to access.
- Very small charities can sometimes benefit from subsidies or special offers, while larger organisations have training budgets. As a result, medium-sized charities can face a disadvantage in investing in training.
- For survey respondents, it was more important that their learning is accredited than it leads directly or indirectly to a qualification, or that it offers CPD hours. 41% thought accreditation is important or very important, compared with 27% who thought that qualifications are important.
- Managers and leaders do not always prioritise their own development, which has implications for the management of their organisations. Leaders said that they could not justify spending money on themselves when training budgets could be used to upskill their teams.
- Charities often find it difficult to articulate the case for training, and the research highlighted the need to do this to communicate the importance of skills development amongst trustees, leaders, managers, and funders, to develop a culture of learning.

Our next steps

As a result of the wide findings of the research, we have reviewed the development and training we offer to charity managers. We will be making changes to fill the gaps and to make our materials more accessible, as well as exploring greater collaboration with other training providers.

Three immediate developments will be:

- Improving navigation of Cranfield Trust learning materials, information resources and webinar resources on www.cranfieldtrust.org to help charity leaders and managers find the guidance they need, and to understand what to expect and what they can learn through the resources.
- Continuing to develop new materials and to host webinars in Cranfield Trust's 'Essentials to Excellence' management learning series, to fill the gaps identified by the research, and to promote engagement with management learning and development.
- Seeking to collaborate with other training providers, identifying training courses outside the Trust's own areas of expertise, improving charities' navigation and understanding of learning opportunities, and working together, raising awareness of the training available free or at low cost.

The full research report, market map (of available training) and research appendices are available on our website.



We have developed a new three-year business plan, to take Cranfield Trust to 2026.

Our main objectives are to:

Continue to develop our core services

Our core services are well established, and receive excellent feedback. Demand is strong and likely to continue at a high level, as charities respond to rising demand for their services, falling income and workforce challenges. We expect our current services to continue to be needed by frontline charities, and it is possible that further types of support may be helpful. We will consider developing further services if needed.

Use our insight effectively

We have a strong position in supporting and advocating for excellent management in the voluntary sector. Through our services, we have excellent insight which we will share with others in the sector, to help to inform and influence our own and their activities. We hope to share our insight with other service providers like ourselves, as well as with funders and government.

Explore and develop a management training programme

Having undertaken research into management training and development in the last year, we will work towards the development of a management training programme, to build the skills of sector leaders and managers, improving capability and confidence on a larger scale than our current services enable.

Across these objectives, we will be working to ensure that the Trust is diverse, inclusive and equitable in all its activities, that we work to minimize our environmental impact, and that we make the most of opportunities offered by technology developments.





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